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ABSTRACT

An informal followup study was conducted to determine the permanence of gains in compliance with Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments in 23 California districts that had used compliance strategies developed by the California Coalition for Sex Equity in Education. Fourteen of the original districts' strategy implementation teams were contacted and two members of each team interviewed by phone. Analysis of the responses suggests that the implementation strategies may have had permanent results. Programmatic changes made by the districts tended to be maintained across all categories of Title IX concern, including the areas of equity in physical education, athletics, and academic courses for students and equity in personnel practices for teaching and administrative staffs. New initiatives tended to be taken most frequently in districts that had made appreciable gains in the original experimental period. (Author/PGD)

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE RESILIENCE OF TITLE IX REFORMS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

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1. Background

Though Title IX has been the "law of the land" since 1975, its implementation has always, to a large extent, depended upon the goodwill of actors at the local level. Congress enacted Title IX in 1972, but declined to provide any direct funding for its implementation. When the legislation took form and flesh in the 1975 implementing regulations, it became apparent that the federal government was offering both a "carrot" and a "stick" to local school districts. The "carrot" was the offer of free services from the training and technical assistance projects established around the country to promote the transition to Title IX. Shrewd school administrators correctly saw in this an opportunity to review their entire curriculum and to modernize many school practices with sophisticated external support. At least for those for whom the pro-equity intentions of Title IX were not too threatening, this was an attractive carrot. The stick was the threatened termination of all federal funds to districts who, in the eyes of the Office for Civil Rights, were flagrantly out of compliance with Title IX. Though this threat may have seemed credible to some, it more likely was just a paper tiger. Almost from the outset, OCR displayed little appetite for its coercive power. As the national political climate grew increasingly conservative in the late 1970's, the probability of any given school district losing its federal funds for Title IX violations shrank to negligible levels. To date, no district has lost its federal funds as a result of Title IX. If any change was to come, it was apt to result from some structure of cooperation between local district and federal agency, rather than from coercion.

The "carrot seemed to work well enough. Title IX "success stories" filled the journalistic literature. The journalistic nature of these stories, however, could not assure skeptics that any real change had taken place. A more scholarly attempt at measuring change in Title IX compliance was mounted by the California Coalition for Sex Equity in Education in 1978. The CCSEE had earlier developed a very explicit "carrot-oriented" approach known as the "power-based" strategy. This approach called for identifying key actors in the local district power structure, winning their support for Title IX, providing them with technical assistance and moral support, and ultimately, transforming them into locally-based advocates for Title IX. Although it was recognized that the key actors (the "shakers and movers") might hold different positions in different districts, the general principle was that it was best to secure support at the very top level of district administration: among superintendents, personnel directors, and so forth. To test the effectiveness of these strategies, CCSEE obtained funding under the Womens Educational Equity Act (WEEA) for a two-year long quasi-experimental evaluation study. In this study, CCSEE selected a stratified random sample of California school districts into experimental and control groups that were roughly representative of the population of

school districts inCalifornia. CCSEE offered training and technical assistance to the experimental group and kept the control group districts from receiving any comparable assistance from other pro-equity groups. Using a quantitative measure for scaling the "degree of institutional effort" to comply with Title 1X (validated as part of the study), CCSEE took pre- and post-treatment assessments of Title 1X compliance among districts in both groups. This study reached several conclusions, most of which 1 reported at the AERA meetings in Los Angeles in 1981. To recapitulate briefly, we found that:

1. The processes by which districts attain compliance are neither consistent nor orderly.

2. After one and one half years of "treatment", the experimental group improved its score rankings to such an extent that it made statistically significant gains in the areas of access to courses, physical education, employment, and "overall" compliance.

3. Modeling relations within the tables using a variant of "D Systems" analysis suggested that districts grew most dramatically in the areas in which they had received the most assistance, that resource linkage and networking were particularly effective strategies (quite consistent with the "power-based" strategy's theory), and that after initial exposure to pro-equity training and technical assistance, districts reach a threshold beyond which additional services are greeted by diminishing returns.

But what happened in those districts after the project that encouraged and trained them withdrew? Did the district maintain its gains or, better still, did it sustain its momentum for change and pursue new pro-equity reform objectives? Or did it, once freed from the scrutiny of outsiders, regress to its previous condition of segregated play, of segregated vocational and home economics courses, of segregated physical education programs, of inequitable athletics, and so forth? Does the formal institutionalization of Title 1X reforms ensure their resilience, even during times when national leadership fails to promote the ideals upon which those reforms were enacted? (Certainly any districts who, under the Carter administration, feared coercion in the area of Title 1X no longer harbor such anxieties.) Are the reforms being maintained?

11. A Follow-Up Study

1t is impossible to answer these questions without some kind of follow-up study; yet 1 know of no such study in the literature. 1t is ironic that the follow-up strategy is so widely ignored, since it would provide the best evidence of the lasting value of the effort and money expended to promote Title 1X in schools. The lack of follow-up research stems, no doubt, from the conditions under which evaluations of educational programs are usually performed: rushed. Those programs that commission or design systematic evaluations of the impact of their efforts usually need their results to justify extension of their projects; hence the time frame for

evaluation is hitched to funding cycles. Needless to say, this may be (and usually is) a totally unrealistic time frame for measuring a program's effectiveness---particularly its long-term effectiveness. In the case of CCSEE, rigorous evaluation was the raison d'etre, but upon the completion of that effort, further WEEA funding was not sought. Hence, though its constituent organizations continued to cooperate in various pro-equity ventures, CCSEE ceased to exist as a formal agency. Nevertheless, CCSEE had established excellent baseline data on which a follow-up study could be based: elaborate documentation on the characteristics, progress, and compliance statuses of a random sample of California school districts.

Recognizing the value of this legacy, Barbara Peterson (one of the Co-Directors of CCSEE) and I undertook to recontact the districts that had been in the experimental group of the original study and assess the fates met by their Title IX reforms since our last contact in December of 1979. Unfortunately, this research had to be conducted without any budget whatsoever, a condition that severely limited the depth of its detail. Operating under the auspices of the Region IX Sex Desegregation Assistance Center, we surveyed by telephone two members of the district team that had served as liaison to CCSEE during the original study. Respondents were asked the following series of questions:

1. Has your district taken any new initiatives to comply with Title IX in the area of...(area of greatest pre/post growth during project participation)? (If yes), what were those initiatives?

2. Have you taken any new initiatives in other areas of Title IX compliance? (If yes), what were those new initiatives?

3. As of our last contact with you, you had made strides in Title IX compliance in the areas of (list the three areas of pre/post gains, if applicable). In particular, our records show that your district...(cite three specific programmatic reforms documented in our records, coresponding to the above-cited areas). As we now proceed through the 1981-1982 school year, we are curious to know whether these programs/practices are still salient in your districts, or whether some of them were found to be unworkable in the present fiscal and political climate.

4. Is there a Title IX coordinator appointed for this school year? What is her/his name and position?

5. Is your district taking any steps to publicize Title IX this fall? How are you publicizing it and what are your target populations?

6. We're curious to know whether there have been any changes in your district's employment patterns since January of 1980. Has the Affirmative Action Plan been modified since that time? (If yes), how? What percent of your administrative staff are female (in the 1981-

1982 school year)? Is this about the same percentage as two years ago, an increased percentage of women, or a decreased percentage of women in administration?

7. (For districts with secondary schools): Since January of 1980, have the enrollment sex ratios changed in any courses that were traditionally single-sex? (If yes), which courses? What percentage of students in those courses are female? How does this compare to the 1979-1980 school year? How do you arrive at these percentage estimates? Do you know from a review of data, from "guestimates", from discussions with colleagues, or what?

8. All things taken together, would you say that, in the time since January 1980, your district has implemented new steps to promote Title IX compliance, consolidated and stabilized earlier changes but taken no new steps, or reversed some of the earlier efforts at Title IX compliance?

9. Looking back over the past few years, do you think that Title IX has had much real impact on the quality of interaction in day-to-day life in your schools?

The data were collected during November and December of 1981 and in January of 1982 by Barbara Peterson and Barbara Thalacker, both of the Region IX SDAC. Unfortunately, because both the interviewers and the interviewees are extraordinarily busy people, it was difficult to make all of the necessary telephone connections. Hence, the follow-up study lost nine of the original 23 cases from the old experimental group. This not only reduces our (already weak) powers of statistical inference, but it also undermines the representativeness of the sample. Table 1 provides a succinct comparison of the characteristics of the reported and the missing districts.

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF VALID AND MISSING DATA
(N's Reported)

Original Characteristics		Districts Reporting Here	Missing Cases	Original N
Gain Scores	Gainers	5	6	11
	No Change	4	4	8
	Decliners	2	2	4
Metropolitanism	Metro	6	8	14
	Non-Metro	7	2	9
% Minority Enroll. (in Quintiles)	Highest 1	0	3	3
	2	4	3	7
	3	3	2	5
	4	2	1	4
	Lowest 5	3	1	4
%AFDC Families (Tripartite)	Highest 1	4	2	6
	2	4	5	9
	Lowest 3	6	2	8
District Size (ADA)	Small	7	4	11
	Medium	6	2	8
	Large	1	3	4

Table 1 suggests that our follow-up study is not likely to suffer from bias resulting from sampling too many of those districts that made substantial gains during the original study. The follow-up sample is only seriously flawed in one respect: none of the three original districts with high-minority enrollment were included in the follow-up, and only one of the four very large school districts was included. As we shall see, this limits our ability to test the influence of exogenous factors upon our results.

As noted earlier, interviewers called two members of each of the former district teams to pose the battery of questions. Of the 28 persons interviewed, 10 were central office administrators, 12 were building principals, 3 were building administrators other than principals, and 3 held some other sort of position (one teacher, one librarian, and one board members). There is some risk in this, since administrators in general (and principals in particular) tend to be excessively bullish in their estimation of their schools' progress. While boosterism is fine at the local level, it can seriously distort evaluation findings. Our analysis suggests that responses were not systematically affected by the position of the respondent. Furthermore, the responses of the two interviewees (who were, of course, interviewed independently), proved to be remarkably consistent ($r=.89$). Nevertheless, we took one extra precaution to bolster the veracity of our information: before coding the responses, we checked respondents' statements against the available record. In a few cases we found that a respondent claimed as a new initiative a program that had already been enacted and implemented during the original study. In such cases, we did not take the respondents at their word; rather than coding that they had taken new initiatives, we coded that they had merely maintained their existing program.

III. Results

The telephone interviews, when collected and analyzed, offer a portrait of stability: for the most part, pro-equity reforms implemented during participation in the project remained in place. Marginals and frequencies for the relevant interview items are presented in Table 2:

TABLE 2

DISTRICT ACTIONS ON TITLE IX SINCE JANUARY 1980

Item	Yes	No	N
New initiative in area of greatest pre/post Title IX gain?	37%	63%	27
New initiative in other area of Title IX compliance?	32%	68%	28
Still have a Title IX coordinator?	92%	8%	26
Take steps to publicize Title IX this past Fall?	69%	31%	26
Have you modified your Affirmative Action policy?	0%	100%	23

Item	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Don't Know	N
Have enrollment sex ratios changed in traditionally sex-typed courses?	13%	57%	9%	22%	23

	Increased % Women	About Same	Decreased % Women	N
How has administrative staffing changed?	38%	52%	10%	29

	Maintained	Extended	Regressed	N
Status of specific three programs implemented during project participation?	87%	4%	9%	56

	Took New Steps	Stability	Reversed	N
Global assessment of present Title IX status?	29%	68%	3%	28

	Real Impact	Changed, but not because of Title IX	No Impact	N
Overall assessment of Title IX impact on day-to-day life of students?	70%	7%	22%	2

As Table 2 makes quite clear, nearly all districts reporting in the follow-up study managed to maintain the programmatic changes that they had made during their involvement with the CCSEE project. Those that had taken new initiatives often were merely completing work that had been begun and planned (but not yet implemented) in January of 1980. For example, one Southern California district that sees itself as being on the "cutting edge" of pro-equity changes had devloped a comprehensive affirmative action plan during its participation in the experimental group; it has since then reinforced its commitment to hiring more women administrators by advertizing more widely for openings and by actively encouraging applications from within its own ranks; it reports 40% more women in administration than it had in January of 1980. One rural Northern California district reports that its open enrollments in home economics and vocational education course are now taken for granted, with a resulting 10% increase in male enrollment in the foods classes. The numbers barely convey the principal's amazement that most accept Title 1X as "just the way it is now". Another Northern California district notes that evidence for the integration of Title 1X into local norms can be found in the lack of contention about the high school girls' insistence that they too be allowed to drive the homecoming limosines. Both the anecdotes and the review of specific programs suggest that Title 1X's reforms have been relatively robust in this sample of districts.

Furthermore, it appears that the reforms have held firm across all categories of Title 1X activity. Table 3 tells the story:

TABLE 3

PROGRAM MAINTENANCE BY AREA OF PRIOR EMPHASIS

Emphasis	Maintained	Reduced	Extended	N
Access to Courses	89%	11%	0%	9
Access to Non-Academic	75%	17%	8%	12
Physical Education	100%	0%	0%	8
Athletic	91%	9%	0%	11
Employment	86%	7%	7%	14

All areas enjoy high levels of program maintenance. The hotly contested physical education and athletics programs, often the most controversial and the most resistent to initial change, seem to be the most robust of all. The area of access to non-academic activities, the most ephemeral of all Title 1X's areas (ie. that area most difficult to manage by changes in policy) was the area of weakest change in our original study; here it appears to be the area that at once was the most reduced and the most extended in the two years since CCSEE bowed out of the picture in these districts.

For those districts that did report some amelioration of their Title 1X status since January 1980, the degree of change varied widely. For example, three districts reported that enrollment sex ratios had changed since our last contact with them. All three districts claimed to have improved their ratios somewhat, but the estimates of magnitude were fuzzy and unlikely to inspire much confidence. Only one district actually

continued to monitor enrollments through collection and assessment of data, and that district saw an 8% increase in boys enrollment in cooking classes, but a 2% decline in girls enrollment in auto shop. One can assume from the large number of "don't know" responses to this question that very few districts actively monitor their compliance status in this area.

A substantial number of respondents (38%) claimed that their districts had increased the proportion of women in administration since January 1980. Here again, estimates of magnitude varied widely, as Table 4 makes clear:

TABLE 4

VARIABILITY IN PROPORTION FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS

	X	SD	N
Population	.24	.11	18
More Female Administrators	.27	.09	11
Same # Female Administrators	.19	.12	7

As is evident from Table 4, we can be somewhat confident of these means, but the small sample size and the considerable range of responses (Range= 38%) leaves us with little confidence in the exact level of improvement. On average, the districts reporting had women working in 24% of their administrative slots, but the true average could be as high as 35% or as low as 13%. Among those districts that reported that they had increased the number of women in administrative jobs since January of 1980, the average was a bit higher, 27%; because of variability, however, the true average could be as high as 36% or as low as 18%. Among those districts that had about the same proportion women in administration in 1982 as they had had in 1980, the average proportion of administrators who were female was only 19%, and the true average could be as high as 31% or as low as 7%. So again, we won't advance any grandiose statistical claims with our small sample. It does appear, however, that women are making inroads into the former male preserve of school administration.

Our original study grouped districts in the experimental and control groups into three status groups, based on the differences between their pre-treatment and post-treatment scores on the quantitative scale of Title IX compliance: districts were termed to be "gainers", "no change" districts, or "decliners". Perhaps the gainers of two years ago have had more difficulty maintaining their gains; on the other hand, perhaps their momentum has carried them on to greater levels of compliance in the period since CCSEE withdrew from their districts. In a similar vein, perhaps the decliners and the no change districts are fundamentally conservative and have spent the last two years either regressing to the primordial ooze or firmly clinging each to their own status quo. More optimistically, perhaps these districts were just slow to catch on and have, in the past two years, taken great strides toward Title IX compliance. Table 5 provides some clues:

TABLE 5

NEW INITIATIVES AMONG ORIGINAL GAIN SCORE GROUPS

		Gainers	No Change	Decliners	N
New initiatives in area of greatest prior progress:	Yes	50%	40%	10%	10
	No	58%	24%	18%	17
New initiatives in other area of Title IX:	Yes	67%	11%	22%	9
	No	53%	37%	10%	19
Increased % Women Adm		73%	27%	0%	11
About the Same % Women Adm		40%	33%	27%	15
Decreased % Women Adm		100	0	0	2

This table suggests that the new initiatives, especially in new areas of Title IX emphasis, were most often taken by the gainer group of two years ago. Others may interpret this table differently, but I see no compelling evidence that the prior gain score status of the districts made much difference in predicting their ardor for new initiatives. Since gainers comprised about 70% of the original experimental group, this table almost suggests that some of the laggard districts caught up a bit. This can be seen more clearly if we turn the table on its head.

TABLE 6

PERCENT OF PRIOR GAIN SCORE GROUPS TAKING NEW INITIATIVES

	New initiatives in same areas? Yes	No	N
Gainers	33%	67%	15
No Change	50%	50%	8
Decliners	25%	75%	4

	New initiatives in other areas? Yes	No	N
Gainers	38%	62%	16
No change	13%	87%	8
Decliners	50%	50%	4

	Increased % Women in Administration? Yes	Same	Decrease	N
Gainers	50%	38%	12%	16
No change	38%	63%	0	8
Decliners	0	100	0	4

Table 6 indicates more clearly still that gainers were pretty much like the other groups in that they, for the most part, maintained the programs and practices that they had implanted during 1979 and 1980. A few took new initiatives, but the overall impression one gets from Table 6 is one of stability. The key difference is that the gainers stabilized the gains they had made during the earlier period, whereas the other districts seem to remain relatively untouched by Title IX.

Our original study paid considerable attention to the demographic factors that influenced a district's propensity to incorporate Title IX's mandates into its policies and practices. For consistency, let's briefly examine how these same demographic and ecological variables affected districts' behaviors during the past two years:

TABLE 7

RECENT TITLE IX INITIATIVE BY SELECTED DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

		New Initiatives in Same Area?		
		Yes	No	N
Metropolitan		42%	58%	12
Non-Metropolitan		33%	67%	15
District Size:	Small	27%	73%	15
	Medium	46%	54%	11
	Large	100%	0%	1

		New Initiatives in Other Areas?		
		Yes	No	N
Metropolitan		8%	92%	12
Non-Metropolitan		50%	50%	16
District Size:	Small	44%	56%	16
	Medium	18%	82%	11
	Large	0%	100%	1

		Increased % Women in Administration?			
		Yes	Same	Decreased	N
Metropolitan		58%	42%	0	12
Non-Metropolitan		25%	63%	12%	16
District Size:	Small	19%	69%	12%	16
	Medium	64%	36%	0%	11
	Large	100%	0%	0%	1

According to Table 7, metropolitan districts were somewhat more likely to sustain their efforts in their prior area of concentration than were non-metropolitan districts, but they were far less apt to branch out into new areas of endeavor. Perhaps because of their larger size and (perhaps) higher turnover, they also were more successful at increasing their share of women administrators. However the surprise heroes of our earlier study had been the small non-metropolitan districts that had, prior to 1978

never before had contact with a pro-equity project. These districts registered enormous gains in their Title lX compliance during their paricipation in CCSEE's study. These smaller, non-metropolitan districts seem to have been more likely to tackle another area of Title lX compliance in the period following CCSEE's departure; however they were somewhat less successful at increasing the proportion of their administrators who are women.

lV. Conclusions

The data presented here offer some encouragement to those pro-equity activists who might worry that all of their efforts will quickly come undone in the Age of Reagan. While it still is impossible to assess the long-term fate of the Title lX reforms, they seem to have weathered the past two years pretty well, at least in this small sample of districts in California. Districts that had started to change their procedures during their involvement with CCSEE finished up their tasks, consolidated their gains, and in a few cases even tackled new areas of sex discrimination. These data support the idea that "carrot-oriented" approaches to organizational innovation have greater long-term benefits than divisive and punitive "stick-oriented" approaches. CCSEE's power-based strategies seem to have succeeded in identifying and mobilizing local advocates for Title lX, and these advocates will remain in their jobs long after CCSEE's demise.

Although we cannot support it with data here, there is also some reason to think that Title lX's reforms will remain robust, even as federal funds to encourage it are reduced. Once new rights and prerogatives are granted, they are difficult to take away. To take an unrelated example, Massachusetts has had considerable difficulty enforcing its recent RAlSlNG of the minimum legal drinking age, even though forms of age discrimination are usually the easiest for a society to justify and legitimate; many (including, of course, those under the legal age) just don't believe that it is fair to cancel rights that have already been given. Though we don't usually think of the many boys in cooking classes, girls athletics teams, co-ed physical education classes, and girls in auto shops as part of the local "power base", they are apt to be local advocates for Title lX at the time that someone tries to force them to return to "the good old days" of blatant sex discrimination.

Furthermore, the 1980 Census will tell us that most of the mothers of school-age children now work at least 30 hours/week in the labor force. Today's parents are quite apt to know that rapidly changing labor market conditions require that all of their children receive the best possible education, unfettered by anachronistic notions of what is appropriate for students of a particular gender to learn. Labor market conditions for the balance of the century are likely to require more and more workers to make mid-career changes; a broad education is the best preparation for this more fluid life-course scenario. Hence parents too are apt to oppose any conservative retrenchment that capriciously limits the options available to their children.

ln sum, there is some reason for optimism, despite the daily barrage of bleak headlines. Though we cannot have endless confidence in these findings (with our small sample and high attrition), we can cautiously advance the proposition that institutional reforms, once implanted, stick. lndeed, the evidence points to the development of new, more equitable norms

on the campuses that were studied. These new norms did not develop entirely on their own; they were nurtured by projects like CCSEE. More importantly, though, they stemmed from the broadened official definition of equity implicit in the Title IX amendment of 1972. Though the diffusion of these norms has been slow, it seems to have been taking root. This should not lure us into complacency; there, no doubt, is still a lot of sexism out there. Moreover, if Title IX were to be rescinded by Congress, it could serve to delegitimate the pro-equity norms that have emerged among school personnel over the past decade. While this danger is always present in this Congress, we can probably take some comfort in the administration's vulnerability in economic and foreign policy areas...a vulnerability that makes unpopular repressive social legislation less likely. Nevertheless it should remain our foremost legal concern. There we draw the line in the dirt!